

# Fruits & Vegetables

**1. Fruits & vegetables are the foundation of a healthy diet.** They are important sources of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants & fibers that reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases & certain cancers. To get a healthy variety, think color! Colorful fruits & vegetables contain higher concentrations of vitamins, minerals & different colors provide different benefits. Aim for at least 5 portions each day!

**2. Make half your plate fruits & vegetables.**

**3. Eat fresh fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.** Juice is often sweetened but fresh fruits have natural sugars. When you eat fruit, you are taking in a lot of fiber, which is needed by the body, & fruits of course are an excellent source of vitamins.

**4. Focus on Greens!** Dark leafy green vegetables are a vital part of a healthy diet. They are packed with nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, zinc, & vitamins A, C, E & K. Greens help to strengthen the blood & respiratory systems. They are currently the most lacking food in the American diet. Be adventurous in your choice of greens: kale, mustard greens, broccoli, Chinese cabbage are just a few of the many options.

**5. Fruits & vegetables should be part of every meal, & be your first choice for a snack.** Eat a minimum of five portions each day. The antioxidants & other nutrients in these foods help protect against developing certain types of cancer & other diseases.

**6. Craving for sweets?** Sweet vegetables: Naturally sweet vegetables are an excellent way to add healthy sweetness to your meals & reduce your cravings for other sweets. Some examples of sweet vegetables are corn, carrots, beets, sweet potatoes or yams, winter squash, & onions.

**7. Go for the brights!** The brighter, deeper colored fruits & vegetables contain higher concentrations of vitamins, minerals & antioxidants.

**8. Avoid!** Fruit juices can contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar per cup; avoid or dilute with water. Canned fruit often contains sugary syrup, & dried fruit, while an excellent source of fiber, can be high in calories. Avoid fried veggies or ones smothered in dressings or sauces.

